Pamph
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CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

[by "a Serbian"]

I

HOW quickly have flown these last seven years, my dear Friend, since we bade each other farewell at the University. Soon after our parting I was able to greet you as an English clergyman, and not long afterwards you had the opportunity to greet me as a Serbian clergyman. And our correspondence has continued uninterrupted till to-day. Can you remember how beautifully you wrote to me once: "For the true friendship of two men there exists neither distance, time, nor space; neither does national frontier, or difference of Government, or difference of confession, or of race play any part here." In this I agreed with you. Such a friendship in truth existed between us. But it is better to have and to feel this friendship than to describe it. The chief thing is that we were friends even at that time when our respective nations were not yet allied, and that we are friends to-day, and that we shall be friends to-morrow whatever may be the constellation of the stars in heaven or of the nations upon the earth. But we must both confess that this war has brought a considerable change in our soul-life: it has strengthened our friendship. For it is a rule that war makes kinsmen more akin and friends more friendly. As birds driven by the storm

But nobody in all the world feels the load of such questions like the ministers of Christ and the preachers of His gospel. Be assured, my Friend, that the Christian people and their ministers in Serbia "live not by bread alone," but also search sincerely and painfully for the answers to the above questions. On that account allow me both as a minister of the gospel and as an eye-witness of the war to give the same answer to you that I have given to my Serbian flock, impelled as I am by the same spiritual needs as all religious men of the Old and New Worlds.

III

Where is Christianity? That is the first question. My answer is: *Only there where suffering is.* If I say that, I do not mean unmerited suffering only, but merited suffering too. For all suffering purifies and ennobles. Suffering for righteousness is always suffering caused by others and suffering for unrighteousness is always suffering caused by ourselves. The righteous man always suffers, either for those who have lived before him, or for those who will live after him. The cause of a good man's suffering lies outside him; the cause of a bad man's suffering lies within him. Just as suffering strengthens the good man in his goodness, so it weakens the bad man in his badness. The man who never suffered either in soul or in body was never a Christian man. The history of Christianity is the history of suffering in all its myriad forms. The Church suffered either from the persecutions or the favours of the State; either from outside tyranny or internal pride; either from philosophers or from fools;

either from fanatics or apostates; from hindrances either without or within. All Church history is interwoven with suffering—and that, the suffering of sinners and of saints. The sinners suffered in the doing of the sin; the saints as they regarded it. Not Judas alone suffered because of his great sin, but many and many others, yesterday and to-day, who have become conscious of the enormity of his sin. In respect to Judas, I think that his soul was very near to Christianity in the moment when he suffered those agonies of remorse. And the Apostle Paul suffered when he merely *saw* the idolatry of Ephesus and the immorality of Corinth; as indeed he suffered, too, when he beheld in spiritual vision the sufferings of this travailing creation (Rom. viii. 22). All great souls in pagan as well as in Christian times have best loved to dwell in their melancholy solitude (Homer, Heraclitus, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, Virgil, Seneca, Basil, Dante, St. Bernard). When I asked one of my pupils, "How do you imagine the great Fathers of the Church?" he replied, "As men who never smiled," and I did not object to the answer. Indeed, it is very difficult for us to connect a smile with the mouth of Chrysostom, Athanasius, or Knox; even as it is also equally difficult for us to disconnect a smile from the lips of the priest of Dionysus. But behold: as have been those great men who expressed Christianity in ethical-dogmatical formulæ, so have been also the men who expressed it in verse, in colours, in woodwork, or in stone. Dante, da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and the great builders of Rheims Cathedral, of Notre Dame and of Westminster Abbey, lived, as is well known, in the same secret melancholy as the first Fathers of the

Church. Such were the great modern representatives of Christianity too: Butler, Lamennais, Solovief, Newman. Such were, finally, the great exponents of Christianity in literature: Tolstoy, Dickens, and Dostojevsky. There has never been in the world any saint happy under the shadows of his neighbours' sins. Why must all great souls be melancholic? Because great souls always suffer in the sufferings of their fellow-men. But no matter how dark may be the melancholy of a pure Christian soul, it is never darker than the clouds through which pierce the rays of the sun. Christian optimism, like the distant sun of our universe, penetrates those melancholy garments which enrobe the good and suffering souls of earth. Thus Christianity is not a light which dazzles by the brilliance of its burning rays, but rather a mild and tender light which comes through clouds to meet and greet our longing souls.

Is there any Christian spirit among the European peoples who are fighting now? That is the question. Yes, my Friend, I say yes. However paradoxical it may seem, I maintain that in this war, in which from day to day are being killed tens of thousands of human beings, more Christian spirit is being shown than in the peace of yesterday.

IV

Do you not think, my Friend, that the first quality of the Christian spirit is *humility?* The name of the peace of yesterday was *Pride.* Proud were the men of science of their knowledge, the artists of their art, the nobility of their titles, the rich of their riches—and all

living men, in general, proud of their fancied immense superiority in the scheme of things! (cf. Jer. ix. 23). Before this war the men of science imagined that they knew all things; the nobility that they alone possessed noble-mindedness; the rich that they had all the riches; and every living man, in general, that human life was of infinitely more value than any other kind of life in Nature. "Our great scientific mind can save humanity from all calamity," said the men of science. "Our wealth is the greatest good of human-kind," thought the rich. "Our traditional manners and prestige keep society in equilibrium," imagined the nobility. "Our life is by far the greatest thing in Nature; without us Nature would be blind and dead"—such was the conviction of the majority of living men. People were talking about the Over-mind, the Over-might, the Over-state (v. Bernhardi), the Over-man (Nietzsche). Meanwhile the mighty Alps beheld with scorn all human works, opinions and generations which were one after the other, down at their foot, marching to their oblivion and their grave. The spirit of humility was banished to the peasant's hut and dwelt amongst the poor and little. Truly the crowded cathedrals remained in the cities, but the people in their pride were as cold as the ancient pillars. The spirit of humility was absent from politics, science, art, factory, and even from theology. Religion had been reduced to theology, theology to science, and science to conceit. This spirit ruled most of all in Germany. Nietzschianism, which was only the final phase of Germany's gradual rise in pride and fall in humility during the last hundred years, had penetrated, as water penetrates a sponge, the whole intellectual and social life of Ger-

many. In more than twenty German universities was preached and taught essentially Nietzschianism. I speak as a witness who has himself sought light at German universities. In these universities all principles, religions, social, philanthropic and ethical, were destroyed more radically than the howitzers of to-day are destroying the monuments of culture, through which, as through their eyes, look down upon us the generations who have gone before us on this planet. Biblical criticism—these sad *docta ignorantiae*—left behind nothing of the Bible, as Lange rightly says, but the covers. Philosophical criticism either created idols, or agitated for idolatry, or exposed the great thinkers only to ridicule. Literary criticism has done nothing but sow hot sand upon the green meadows. Juristic criticism has eaten into and corrupted the solid juristic conceptions of thousands of years and stopped only with respect before the monstrous theory of the Ueberstaat (Over-State), which the ambition of neurotic men created for a day. Social criticism—even in the middle of the nineteenth century—resulted only in the watchword: *der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* (Max Stirner).*

The other nations of Europe were somewhat outdistanced by Germany in her foolish destruction of the good and her construction of monstrosities. But England and Russia remained farthest behind upon this road, along which Germany tugged the whole world to certain ruin. Even in these latter countries, however, although they were the most sober, there was room enough for pride—scientific, commercial, artistic, political.

* The single individual and his possessions.

Then came the war.

I don't know the man who could convince me that in the peace of yesterday there was more Christian spirit than in the war of to-day—I say in the peace of yesterday, when a man had regularly only his one selfish sorrow, than in the war of to-day, when a man has many sorrows about many thousands of human beings, his brothers and compatriots.

Then came the catastrophe, and pride went away. The man of science found himself in the same trench with the ignorant man ; the peer with the fisherman, the millionaire with the beggar. What a merciless contrast to the peace ! What a sudden change in souls and hearts. What a rapid reconciliation in the appreciation of the new standards of worth ! The scientific man perceived that he was not much wiser than the ordinary man. The peer was astonished by the unexpected nobility of soul which he found in the fisherman. The millionaire felt himself under the same fate as the beggar. Humility ! A certain professor, very proud of his great knowledge, who was for a long time in the trenches at Belgrade with the simple peasants, told me once : " I was a long time in the trenches and I am sorry to leave them. I am greatly disappointed now. I am convinced that these simple peasants have much more knowledge and noble feeling than I ever supposed ; while I have come to see that, in comparison with them, I myself know much less, and feel much less nobly, than I ever imagined." That was a sincere confession. I suppose, my Friend, that to you, too, such confessions are not unknown in your parish.

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V

But look, my Friend, how wonderful is this! Besides the humility of man to man that has been shown in this war, there has arisen another kind of humility —even the humility of man to all Nature. A whole year now have men been close to their animals, sleeping by their horses and eating alongside their oxen. A whole year now have millions of the healthiest men in the world sat and lain under the earth, with their face resting on the soil and embracing the wood and stones in their sleep. A whole year now have men looked at herbs and plants, and even the roots of plants, touching them in the closest intimacy, breathing in them, living with them, and whispering with them. From this intimacy of man with Nature nothing is excluded: neither water nor light, neither the starry heavens, nor rain nor fog; nor height of Carpathians, nor depth of the Atlantic. In this close fellowship with Nature, every man has experienced the same disappointment that the professor of whom I spoke told me he had felt among the Serbian peasants in the trenches at Belgrade. That is to say, every man has looked deeper into Nature; into her life, into her very soul; and, looking deeper, he has perceived that Nature also lives; lives, and suffers, and thinks; even thinks by some secret transcendental organ, as he himself does—he, the boasting king of Nature. And further, every man who puts his ear to the heart-beat of Nature perceives yet more: that the life of Nature is more healthy and harmonious than the life of man. And this precious experience

leads to humility. I personally have had this experience—and so, as I have found inquiry, have many and many who have spent at least some weeks of intimacy with the earth and her silent children—the elements. Nature silently suffers. I was in the trenches as a military chaplain. I listened to the breathing of the earth, and I felt the harmony of life amid the plant world; I felt, too, the pain of the trees torn and ripped by lead and iron, and I understood the infinite submission of ox and horse to higher, foreign will. And as I had listened to all, felt all, understood all, I put to myself the question which many others have put to themselves: Is indeed man greater and better than Nature? Have you put this question to yourself, my Friend? Humility!

VI

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord! Are we not in the depths—in deeper depths than was even the poet of the Psalms, my Friend? But have no fear; in these very depths religion will be born. Often, very often, when men are in the deepest depths they are nearest God. I will speak now upon the third kind of humility, which is born in the depths—humility towards God. *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*, i.e. proud man has lain hidden behind a heap of earth under a rain of lead and iron, has watched the ants in this heap, and thought that his own life was not much surer, that he was no more the lord of his life than the ant which was under his foot. One must know that the man who is hidden in the black earth, and surrounded with a music of lead and iron, has a

philosophy of life quite different from that of the man who, in peace-time in a great town, in the drawing-room after lunch, sits and quietly thinks over his business. Millions of things which have great worth for the latter are for the former quite worthless. By the former, love, money, ordinary business, most of the affections, most of the ambitions—these are all forgotten. In the battle of Valevo an Austrian officer was seriously wounded. He died on the battlefield. He was found lying on his back with hands clutching the photograph of a little child. To this man had returned before he died the recollection of his family. The past came back to him just before his death. In general, however, men in the trenches live exclusively in the present, and have in eye only two things: life and victory. But these two things of worth are so little dependent upon the men themselves! They feel it; they are convinced of it. They feel that these two values are valueless before some third which dominates all. That is an age-long experience of the human race in war. In ancient times God was called "the Lord of hosts"—the Lord of armies, in modern speech. And indeed nowhere else does one feel so intensely that God is near as on the field of battle; that He is so overwhelming, so irresistible, so omnipotent. Even the man who in time of peace never believed in God feels that a Third, one unknown, is intervening in human life and is taking into His hands the bridles of all human movement. I personally have experienced this, that war has converted many of the most fierce unbelievers into believers. The Socialists in Serbia fought as bravely as the most ardent Nationalists. I heard from many of these Socialists that during

this war they had come to believe in God. Travelling from Nish to Belgrade, a Socialist soldier told me of the sufferings he went through during the war, and he closed with these words : " As a Socialist I considered that I must be an atheist too. That was my mistake. Now I have new thoughts, a new soul. Believe me, war gives a new soul to a man. God, Who had the last place in my thoughts, now occupies the first." I am sure that no missioner has converted so many unbelievers as has this war. War is the greatest missioner. If Heaven sends war to earth, it sends it as a missionary to turn the eyes of earth towards Heaven. And so, to the question, " Where to-day is Christianity ? " we need not give a despairing answer. We can reply : " It is there, where it was, and even where it before never was." Where it was it is now strengthened, and where it was not it is now springing up. Where is Christianity ? Are you agreed with me, my Friend, when I say it is always there where suffering has created humility of man to man, of man to Nature, and of man to God ?

VII

But so soon as we have said what we have said we are up against another important question : " How is Christianity to be reconciled with war ? " The answer : In no way at all. Yes, my Friend, Christianity can in no way be reconciled with war. Christianity is white ; war is black. Christianity is midday ; war is midnight. Therefore, perhaps, the men who find themselves encircled by black are longing for white ; they who are encircled by midnight are longing for midday. With-

out doubt war strengthens the religious consciousness of men like all great catastrophes. And yet Christianity neither causes nor requires nor reconciles itself with war. Doubtless, too, Christianity gains by war many more followers, and yet Christianity never desires to gather followers by this manner. Never in the world's history existed so sincere a desire for Christian peace and love as now exists in contemporary Europe. Never did the ideal of Christ seem to enlightened humanity so sublime over all other ideals, so true, so indispensable as it is now in this time of cataclysm. But the man who awaits the cataclysm of war for the benefit of Christianity will be similar to the old sceptic of Galilee who asked a miracle of Christ before believing in Him. Blessed are they who have seen no miracle, and yet have believed! Blessed are they who before this cataclysm of war reached this religious consciousness and Christian ideal! They are the men built of better material. Christ did not work miracles for the sake of those who believed, but for the sake of those who did not believe. The miracle of war, too, God allows not for the sake of the believers but for the unbelievers. Miracles are never anything other than inferior aid to belief—an inferior aid for inferior natures. Such an aid for such natures is the war too. But for the superior intelligence and the noble heart Nature is the chief aid to belief, and a miracle only incidental and exceptional; the whole of Nature is, indeed, one great "miracle," and all other little miracles are only tedious methods of education for lower intelligence and the less noble souls. Men of harmonious soul feel God in the midst of peace as intensely as the man of unharmonious soul feels Him

in the midst of war. For the former one ray of the sun is sufficient to write before their eyes the name of God ; whereas the latter cannot read the great Name unless it be written in thunder and lightning, by eclipses and earthquakes and rivers of blood, and by all the misery of war. Hundreds of those who, before the war, could not see God in Nature have met Him in the war. Thousands of those who in time of peace looked down upon the gospel from their lofty heights sought it in war with longing and superstition, that they might protect their heads from the enemy's bullets. All those who had ridiculed religion in peace time stopped silent after the miracle of war had come : silent they go into church, silent they visit cemetery, silent count the graves of their friends, and calculate their own place alongside them. Their soul is suffering a shock ; their silence should be respected as we respect a death-chamber, because in their souls an old world is dying to give place to a new. In humiliation now they perceive that all their one-sided preaching on " scientific ethics " and " emancipation from religion " was only empty phraseology ; but they perceive, too, that this war has brought the greatest benefit to themselves : the war has rescued them from their errors and delusions, for now they know the centre point of the universe to be not in themselves, but God. The war has brought them to sobriety and to punishment. This punishment consists in the shame that they could not perceive in peace time the presence of the unseen powers of the universe ; that they had dethroned God and defied man ; and that they allowed their personal pride to make them incapable of humility towards Nature, man, and God. This war has come

as poison against poison—poison from outside as antidote to poison inside. Christianity does not use evil against evil. By evil, indeed, a man sometimes comes sooner to a good goal, but that very goal itself ceases then to be good, since it was attained by evil. To be first in the race is in itself a good thing, is it not? You may stand and applaud the champion in the competition. But imagine that in this very moment you get the assurance that this champion had during the race dug a knife into the ribs and back of his horse that he might cover the ground more quickly; and imagine, still further, that in the moment of the rider's triumph, the horse sinks down to earth by reason of his wounds! I suppose your great applause would be changed into an outburst of fury against this horseman. Suddenly his good goal will seem no longer good to you, but horrible in the moment of your new experience. St. Paul called his life a race. Methinks that the whole history of Christianity represents a race. In this race to the best goal in the world one should go by the best ways, but in the long history of Christianity men have gone by both good and evil ways, and men have used good and evil methods. It was a great mistake to think that men could come by pagan methods to real Christianity, as it is a mistake to fear that by Christian methods we are going to paganism. I am sure Christianity has never failed in regard to the *goal*, but she has sometimes failed in her *methods*. Therefore the race of Christianity has been so long. For evil methods only seem to bring us near to the good goal; in reality they take us farther away from it. For this reason, however much apparent and momentary benefit may accrue to Christianity by

war, she cannot accord with war. She cannot readily accord with war either (1) regarding it as a miracle or (2) as evil. Unfortunately, during many centuries Christianity has been often supported by two methods, miracles and evil, by two quite unnecessary and superfluous methods, which she ought not to have need of —especially after nineteen centuries of her existence. When we were still at the University we had this conviction—do you remember, my Friend?—and this conviction is now strengthened by war.

VIII

But—now comes the last question—when Christianity cannot be reconciled with war, why does she not hinder the war? Let me answer frankly: simply because she cannot. Christianity is not yet grown strong enough successfully to offer resistance to all the evil in the world. Christianity has not yet become such a power that she can prevent all oppression. She is still, even now, more of an external than an internal force; she is still, now, a beautiful cathedral which men regard more from outside than feel and build *in themselves* inside.

Why, for instance, did not Christianity prevent the bloody circus games of Nero? Because she was too weak to do it. As soon as she became stronger she did it. Why did not Christianity prevent the crimes of the Christian Byzantine kings, and the many dark sins of her own chief representatives? Because she was not ethically grown enough to do it. Why did not Christianity suppress the Slave Trade earlier than the nineteenth century? Because she lacked the power

to do it. And finally, why does not Christianity in the twentieth century stop the world war? Because she is to-day, too, weaker than the opposing forces. Christianity came into the world not like a finished and polished statue, which like an idol has to produce miracles; but she came as seed which has to "die," to germinate, to grow, to be trodden down, to be lost —in a word, to suffer all those manifold and painful vicissitudes through which every seed must go. Christianity has come from the *supernatural* world by a *natural way* into this world, and by a natural way, like every seed, she has developed and grown in this world. She does not yet dominate the world, but she does serve the world. She is not yet the full inspirer of politics, but she has a ministry in politics. She does not yet lead the world; because she is still too weak successfully to resist its animal motives by her spiritual motives. Many and many *individuals* have reached Christian perfection, but human society has reached it not yet. But she grows and strengthens. For the largest and noblest tree in history, as is Christianity, it is not too long a time yet, this two thousand years, that it has taken to spread its branches and to begin to bring forth fruit.

During this war Professor Baumgarten, Professor of Theology in Kiel, has delivered a lecture in which he explained the relation between Christianity and the great war of to-day. He said: "The words of Christ were addressed to His disciples; they contained no reference to the demands of public life, but concerned solely the relationship of the individual soul to the individual soul and to God. Christ's train of thought cannot be accepted as being applicable to us Germans,

for our political situation is very different from that of his audience. Furthermore, Christ never represented his realm of peace as being attainable by historical development. He described it as a wonderful achievement of God's. And, as a matter of fact, such a realm of love and peace has its place in a higher world; it is the region of the personality and has *nothing whatever to do with political or public matters.*"

To so dreadful an exposition of Christianity has the last hundred years of biblical criticism brought theological science in Germany. In its extreme results, this German biblical criticism represents Christ as a maniac who has nothing in common with the political and social life of man. And the truth lies in a diametrically opposite direction! No normal man sows a seed, physical or spiritual, without expecting growth, development, and fruit. And Christ—were He nothing higher than an ordinary and normal man—must also have expected some historical development from the seed which he sowed. Moreover, Christ, as the conscious founder of a new religion, could not but see the very close connection between religion and public life. The Kingdom of God must first be *within* you before it can exist *among* you; such is the true teaching of the Gospel. Even with the Jews, never were politics and religion separated, and throughout human history there has existed no religion which has not had its influence on politics. Politics are the resultant of the religion, the morality and the education of a nation. Politics is the practical side of the whole spiritual disposition of a society. If religion be separated from politics, religion becomes fruitless, and politics become narrow-hearted and selfish. Religion must inspire

politics. And when politics become Christian, then the world will have become Christian. And when the world shall have become Christian, then war will be impossible—either as means or end. But if so terrible a war as we see to-day is not to occur in future, then neither must such a peace as we had yesterday still be possible to-morrow. For Christianity is not less at variance with the war of to-day than with the peace of yesterday. The war of to-day is the consequence of the peace of yesterday. Every man who regards historical events *sine ira et studio* will in this agree with me, and I suppose with you, too, my Friend.

IX

What have we seen with our eyes in the peace of yesterday? We have seen men thinking only about themselves, or at most about themselves and their relatives. We have seen men who had only two thoughts in their head: gain and pleasure. We have seen strikes for gain, intrigues for gain and pleasure, and lies and baseness for pleasure and pleasure. We have seen unscrupulous oppression for the weak by the strong. Have we not seen yesterday too—in time of peace—the slaughter and murder of men? Have we not seen the foolish pride of man towards man, and towards Nature, and towards God; the pride of the present towards the past; of science towards religion, and of art towards labour; of town towards village, and of the whole earthly planet towards the cosmos. Shall I mention the monstrous social, economic, national, and ecclesiastical differences? Enough! Perhaps I have asserted some things which are un-

certain, but one thing is certain: if we had asked anyone in yesterday's peace, "Is this peace Christian or not?" we should have received a negative answer.

What do we see to-day in the war? We see greater humility of man towards man, of man towards God, and of man towards Nature. We see, too, a widening of every man's horizon, for behold! now, every Englishman who had plagued himself about himself and his own affairs has now a nobler sorrow concerning some fifty millions of his fellow-countrymen, and of many times fifty millions of allies of England. His narrow and constricted sympathies have now widened out over more than a half of our planet. Moreover, we see now such self-sacrifice in all belligerent countries as we could never have dreamed of during the peace of a few months ago. And we see a great drawing together of men to men; a great desire to work in common for the common good; diminished selfishness and less craving after pleasure; a stronger altruism and self-denial. We see in Moscow now no more drunken people, and in Paris no more unworthy bacchanalia. Of course we see, too, that the price of this moral uplift of men is very, very great: blood, agony, devastation, hunger, disease. In the peace of yesterday, truly, there was less suffering, but less virtue too: less courage, less solidarity, less compassion, less self-sacrifice, less humility. Virtue is more precious than rubies, but the sparks of virtue can only be produced by the hammer of suffering. Christian ascetics did not flagellate themselves out of mere foolishness, but to strengthen the Christian spirit in themselves. By self-imposed sufferings they accom-

plished in themselves what Nature and destiny, by the flagellation of this present war, are accomplishing in the human family. For the war is nothing else than the self-flagellation of humanity. You will say: "But, alas! how many are dead!" Yes, but great ascetics, too, put to death a great part of their being, in order that they might strengthen the remaining part. Humanity, in truth, is one being, in spite of the one and a half milliards of its parts upon the earth. Humanity is no abstract notion; it is a fact—*one* fact, a unity; just as when we see at night a star, upon which perhaps may live countless beings, which yet to our eyes appears as only one single fact in the universe. Plato's *pan-anthropos* is not mere poetry, but a natural, scientific, social and spiritual truth. We are connected with the earth which bears us through the cosmos, with the atmosphere we breathe, with the food we take, with the language we speak, with the thoughts we think, with the feelings we feel, and with the occult radiation which encircles us. In a word, we all are one. Therefore the many killed and dead represent only the mortification of a part of the pan-human organism for the welfare of the other part.

When I say that humanity is a unity, a whole, I mean not only humanity in the present, but also in the past and in the future. The present always works only half for itself and half for the future. Every generation bears in itself more than a half of the past. And thus more than a half of the sin of the present war belongs to the peace of the past. Therefore we have just as much cause to revolt against the peace of yesterday as we have to weep over the war of to-day —and even more; I say more, because the peace of

yesterday caused the war of to-day. Is the boulder to be blamed for rolling down the mountain slope, or the person who set it in motion? If we wish to free ourselves from evil consequences, we must keep clear from their causes. Why do we to-day kill each other's bodies? Because yesterday we were destroying each other's souls. Yesterday indeed there were more living bodies in the world, but fewer living souls. And to-day there are more living souls and fewer living bodies. War does spiritualise.

X

Who is against war? I could not tell you, my Friend. When, in 1908, war seemed imminent between Serbia and Austro-Hungary, Tolstoy was yet living. He wrote then passionately against war. Amid all the talk about world war many authors expressed themselves strongly against it. But now that we have been launched into a world war I could not give you one name of any great man who has openly declared himself against this war. I don't know whether Tolstoy, if he had lived to see it, would have been antagonistic to this war. Methinks that against this war are—nobody and everybody!

Let us put upon one side the General Staffs. The poets and artists are not against this war, e.g.:

Hauptmann and Klinger defended the Kaiser and German people as the champions of righteousness and culture.

Maeterlinck placed himself at the disposal of the Belgian military authorities that they might use him against the Germans.

Anatole France, an old man of seventy-five years, clothed in military uniform, wrote: "Soldiers of France, now shoot into the German flesh!"

Maxime Gorky, although ill, set out from the island of Capri for Russia in order to join the Russian Volunteers.

Shaliapin, the celebrated Russian opera singer, sang in the streets to gather money for the volunteers.

Kipling, in his letters to a French friend, expressed himself for a decisive struggle against Germany. "What is to be done with the Germans? The same thing as with a mad dog. When the dog is mad it should be killed."

D'Annunzio is the chief instigator and supporter of Italy's war with Austro-Hungary.

The Socialists are not against the war. e.g. socialistic leaders in the German Reichstag shook hands with the Kaiser after he had read the proclamation of war. The Nationalistic agitation of Liebknecht throughout the course of the war is well known.

Gustave Hervey wrote in his organ, *La Guerre Sociale*, "Vive le Tsar!" along with many patriotic and bellicose articles.

The Socialists in England and Russia are now poured into one mould with their nations in heart and soul and spirit, and without a protest and without contradiction to their principles are now fighting on the battlefield.

The Socialists in Serbia have lost in this war their best representatives, who have been complimented upon their extraordinary bravery on the battlefield.

The women are not against this war. At the Women's International Congress in Paris they agreed

by resolution that the women approve this war, and demand that it should continue until national ideals are realised.

The Suffragettes in England have several times expressed themselves in favour of the continuation of this war.

The German women are fiercely preaching a national and holy war.

A mother in Serbia distributed a card *In Memoriam* of her killed son, in which she stated: "Glad that I could have a son to offer in this war against Austria."

The Churches are not against the war.

The Russian Holy Synod gave an order to the clergy at the beginning of this conflict to create enthusiasm for the war, and to pray for Russian victory.

In Serbia, at every religious service, prayers are offered for victory over the enemy; and if a bishop celebrates a Liturgy he, with Holy Host in hand, mentions the Serbian King, the English King, the Russian Tsar, the Belgian King, and the French Government.

The Archbishop of Canterbury addressed a letter to Mr. Asquith in which he, as Primate of the English Church, placed at the disposal of the nation all the forces of the Anglican Church.

The Bishop of London declined to consider the application of any candidate for ordination unless that candidate was unable to serve for the war.

The Bishop of Pretoria went to the battlefield, and reported to the English public upon the condition and needs of the English Army.

All the clergy of Great Britain—English, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian—pray, preach, and work for the victory of the English arms.

The Belgian Cardinal, Mercier, wrote a patriotic epistle to the Belgian people, on account of which he was arrested by the Germans.

The Archbishop of Cologne edited a Pan-Germanic manifesto for his flock.

A Jesuit Father in Munich declared that the words of the Kaiser are beyond all discussion.

Erzberger, one of the leaders of the Catholic Central party, wrote : " Nur keine Sentimentalitaet."

The Court Bishop of King Victor Emmanuel blessed the Italian flag in Rome on the declaration of war.

In Italy, " bishops and priests addressed patriotic advice to their flocks, while Socialists and others enlisted," as Premier Salandra mentioned in one of his war-speeches.

Intelligence has not been against the war. Thousands of students from Cambridge and Oxford went off to the front. The youth of the Serbian University led the army on Rudnik and gave an example of self-sacrifice. Amongst the Russian students, where was always a great contingent of Nihilists and Socialists, appeared the greatest enthusiasm for the war.

The simple folk have not opposed the war. The peasants go and are silent. They fight and are silent. They die and are silent. They bear the heaviest burdens of the war upon their shoulders. The working classes, like the peasants, like the Russian Cossacks and Hungarian farmer, go obediently and stoically to death.

Now, who is *against* the war ?

All the world ! All those whom I have mentioned above, and all others whom I have not mentioned. These last three years I have been with the army, and during the whole period I have not met a single man who loved the war, no single man for whom the war was a poetic enterprise. Be sure, my Friend, that all men hate the war, even those who become by war rich and famous. Only those can love the war who regard it coldly from a distance and from the time of peace. Our generation might very well be fascinated by the Trojan war, by the Crusades, by the Napoleonic campaigns, but in no wise could this present generation fall in love with the war of to-day. Those wars were foreign sufferings, and foreign suffering regarded from a distance is beautiful as a sunset—as a sunset seen through a London fog. But this present war is *our own* suffering, our own tears, our own dying—who could see anything beautiful in his own tears ?—except he looked through a mist of years !

How much less beautiful were human history without Gethsemane and Golgotha ! The beauty of Golgotha grows with the years. The beauty of the present war will be perceived by the people of future centuries. But for us, now, only what is far from us is beautiful—the peace ! But no one of us craves for the peace of yesterday, for such an un-Christian peace during which war was prepared, explosives and howitzers were gathered, submarines and forts were built ; a peace in which war was preached and in which nobody was content.

XI

Our " orientation " in this war will depend upon our general views of life. There are only two views of life : religious and anti-religious. But the worst religious view of life is better than the best anti-religious. Have you seen, my Friend, in the British Museum, those African and Asiatic idols ? Be sure that those idols made those men more happy than any atheist has ever been made happy by his most cultivated atheism. Whatever kind of religion it may be, it comforts, encourages, and incites to self-sacrifice, and they are three things which pure atheism can never suggest. However primitive may be the religion, it is always the greatest good possessed by the believer. Think how immense a good is the Christian religion for our generation. Think if the Christian religion had gone under in her century-long conflict with evil and unbelief, with what now could we console ourselves, encourage ourselves, and gird ourselves for sacrifices ? Would it be, perhaps, by scientific morality ? Or by metaphysics, or by material interests ? All these together without Christianity do not give life, but kill it. Think further that our religion is given us not to be an ornament in our times of happiness, but rather to be as support in our suffering. And as a support in suffering religion always shows herself—and in this time of war especially—excellent. She is potent where suffering is, as a medicine is potent where sickness is. Do not all Christ's words sound in your ears like those of a doctor to a sick man. Joseph de Maistre was terribly embittered against Rousseau and Voltaire on

account of their superficial theism. That is the age-long contest between Augustinianism and Pelagianism. Suffering is in the essence of all creatures. St. Paul was not alone in this conviction. With Paul stands Augustine, with Augustine Jansen, with Jansen Pascal. Of this conviction were Joseph de Maistre and Dostojevski. I would say that life is tragic rather than sick. I don't know what drama is being enacted on other planets, but on our planet—I see it clearly—is played tragedy. In the myriads of minor tragedies consists the one great tragedy of this earth. The web and woof of this great life tragedy is woven of pain, tears, fears, ignorance, heroism, death. In this is interwoven the war, too; the war of man against things, against plants and animals: of man against man; and man against God. Christianity comprehends life as a vivid, intelligent drama, and never as a perpetual metaphysical, deaf and blind repetition. Every drama has its beginning and its end. The drama of man's history, too, had its beginning and must have its end. Geology and astronomy agree in this point with the Bible. The earth came into being, has developed, and will vanish. Man's drama upon the earth was from the beginning tragic. Whence came this element of tragedy? The Bible has an answer and an explanation. Physical science begins to have an answer too, in accord with the Bible. To this question the Bible answers: because in the beginning Man was poised midway between God and Nature; he lost the balance, he turned his face from God, and plunged himself wholly into Nature. Hence, says the Bible, because to man came a Satanic thought, that he could become God. But man, in his attempt at realising this dream, instead

of coming face to face towards God, wandered away with his back upon God and more and more into *things*. Thus, instead of becoming God—or even getting nearer to God—he began to worship things and became himself a thing amongst things. When this human tragedy had been played for ages upon the earth, came Christ to open the final act in the world drama. Now begins the return to God. But this return is long and painful. Easier was it for man to mount to pride than to return from pride to humility. Behold, one thousand years have passed, and a second thousand nearly ended, and still the Christ-period in the human drama is not near the end. (The Christ-period comprehends the time from Christ despised on Golgotha to Christ glorified in God's Kingdom upon earth.) Christ's glory is still far off. Instead of listening to angelic voices, we are deafened by the roar of guns and the clash of swords. Involuntarily now we recall the words of Victor Hugo :

> One thing, O Jesus, One mystery
> Doth frighten me :
> The echo of Thy voice grows
> Ever weaker to our ear.*

But so it *appears* only. In truth, the voice of Christ becomes clearer and clearer. And far clearer in the war of to-day than in the peace of yesterday. For the peace of yesterday was not *His* peace, and therefore, in this peace was felt so much unrest of soul ; therefore, every man who sought a true peace was forced to take refuge within himself, as we do to-day. Still, we take good heart of hope. Christ was ever going

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* *This Century.*

through the world, invisible; through the deeps, through catacombs. We will hope that after this storm upon life's ocean will come a peace like unto the peace of Christ, i.e. a peace which will never be the cause of a new war, but the preparation for a better and more God-like peace. Now more than ever true Christians feel Christ's presence on their storm-tossed vessel. They feel Him standing in their midst; they hear His voice: "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt? The end of all will still be good." Or as Browning said: "*The best is yet to be.*"

Life, from the Christian point of view, is essentially an optimistic tragedy. Christianity sees the dark clouds enveloping human life; but through these cloud-tragedies perceives the warm brilliance of a heavenly light. There are in movement everywhere the hosts of war, but over all is the Lord of Hosts, and wherever the presence of that *LORD* is felt, there is optimism.

XII

In this letter, my dear Friend, I would fain have written to you about the Odysseus—wanderings of the human soul. But I must break off here. The war snatches my pen from my fingers, and war's miseries attract my hands and my thoughts elsewhere.

I would fain have written to you as to how the soul, as it wanders away from God, is overclouded with unrest and how, returning to God, it returns to peace—to the only real peace. Certainly you know this, my Friend, as St. Augustine knew it. I would fain have written to you of my war experience. I would like to have proved to you that all the beauty and sweetness

of this world, where "we see through a glass darkly," makes a man who is without faith as unhappy as possible, and that the world, with all its charms, makes a man who has faith half happy. A whole happiness belongs not to this tragical world. All this world represents unrest, but with faith it represents the half-rest. A whole rest belongs to another more godlike world. I would write you—but let us leave that for another time—I would write you how many, many men midst this war-storm have found by faith their half-happiness and half-rest, how many through the blackest clouds have looked and seen the shining stars, and have had the same feeling as one of the greatest men of Western Christianity who said: *Domine . . . inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te!* *

* "O Lord, our heart is ne'er at peace till it find rest in Thee." (St. Augustine's "Confessions.")